

JAPAN RELIEF UPDATE - Thursday, March 24th, 2011

Hello Pastors,

We wanted to provide a short update on the Japan Relief situation as we have been getting many e-mails and calls concerning how to get involved and where to send funds.

We have CC Japanese teams from our CC Japan churches over there right now doing relief work and sending them the funds to work with appears to be our best current approach. We have about 15 CC's over there and strong relationships with them in doing the relief work. We also have some strategic contacts in place for the long haul including some U.S. and Japan government contacts. There are a lot of relief groups on the ground currently and we don't believe sending teams right now is the best approach with the uncertainty of aftershocks, evacuations and nuclear reactor concerns. Most American families have been evacuated so it doesn't seem to be prudent to bring people in the midst of that.

We have 3 groups in place now in the most devastated area.

1. Our CC in N. Tokyo, pastored by Chizou Sakurai, is in Sendai with a truck filled with gas drums, food, blankets, coats, generators, etc. Chizou and his team have partnered with a local church in ministering both spiritually and physically to the people of Sendai.
2. Ricky Barnett, our CC Okinawa pastor, has also arrived in Sendai with another truck of supplies and is now working with Chizou. Additional trucks are being prepared for the trip to Sendai from Tokyo.
3. Marre Ishi, our Committed Fellowship Tokyo pastor, has set up a relief/outreach center in Rikuzen-takata in Iwate Prefecture, which is next to Sendai, and was one of the hardest hit areas. He will be working with Chizou and Ricky and will be a base for the relief work to continue.
4. We are also in contact with and working with other relief groups such as Samaritan's Purse and CRASH to obtain and distribute needed supplies.

So there is a lot of active ministry and support in place right now. We just need the funds to keep it going. We are also developing a long term plan for the support that will be required for years to come. Anyone interested in being on a relief team to go to Japan can sign up on the <http://www.committedrelief.org> website. We will then notify you of when these trips will begin.

You can go to <http://www.committedrelief.org> to get updates and to contribute on line. Or you make out the check to Limitless Boundaries, the relief outreach of CC La Habra, and send to CC La Habra at:

Calvary Chapel La Habra
Attn: Roger Wing
1370 S. Euclid St.
La Habra, CA 90631

There is a tremendous mission field in place for ministry in Japan. The fields are ripe for harvest in this country with a Christian population of less than 1%. With our strong Calvary Chapel presence in Japan, we see being committed for the long haul. So please keep the people of Japan and the ministry being done in prayer. May the Lord use this tragedy to bring people face-to-face with the truth of Jesus.

Be blessed,

Lance Cook & Roger Wing

Numbers 33-34 - Thursday, March 24th, 2011

- We're continuing in our study through the book of Numbers as we find ourselves nearing the end of this, the fourth book in the Pentateuch.
- Lord willing, we'll complete chapters 33 and 34 leaving only two chapters in Numbers which when completed we'll commence in Deuteronomy.
- Now, having said that I need to say this; the chapters we have before us, are what give the book of Numbers such bad press, as being boring.

1 These are the journeys of the children of Israel, who went out of the land of Egypt by their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron.
2 Now Moses wrote down the starting points of their journeys at the command of the LORD. And these are their journeys according to their starting points:

- Here we have, what will become, a written record of all the places that the Israelites camped at, during the 40 years of wilderness wanderings.
- It's almost as if they will be traveling down "memory lane," as it's called, in that, as one said; these are memories of their 40 year camping trip.
- Perhaps the question becomes; why do we have to know about all the places the Israelites stayed at during this, their extended camping trip?

- Those of you who've been studying this amazing book of Numbers know, as it's been said; that you shouldn't be judging the book by its cover.
- In other words, obscure passages like this, in books like this, are usually met with indifference, and skipped over in our reading of God's Word.
- Sadly, we do this to our own peril, and at a very high cost in that we rob ourselves of the unspeakably rich life lessons, God wants to teach us.

- Such is the case with what we're about to see in the verses in front of us. I would suggest to you that we're in store for a most exciting journey.
- As we move into verse three, and on through to the end of the chapter, it's vital that we take note of not only what is here, but what's not here.
- What I mean by that, is this; that which is conspicuously absent from the narrative has the propensity to profoundly impact my view of God.

3 They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the Passover the children of Israel went out with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians.

- Here we start our journey, where the Israelites would start their journey out of slavery in Egypt vis-a-vis the Passover saving them from death.
- It's important we both notice and understand this detail of how Israel went out with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians as they left Egypt.
- I believe the reason this is recorded is because God wants us to know that, like them, we leave our Egypt as victors and not as victims to sin.

LIFE LESSON #1: When I am delivered from a life of sin, I am no longer enslaved by sin, because I am a victor in Christ, and not a victim to sin.

Romans 7:14 NIV We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.

Romans 7:25 NIV Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Romans 6:14-18 NIV For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace. (15) What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! (16) Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? (17) But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. (18) You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

4 For the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn, whom the LORD had killed among them. Also on their gods the LORD had executed judgments.

- Here again we have an important detail that is easily missed at first glance. The Egyptians bury their firstborn son as God judges their gods.
- In every one of the ten plagues God executes judgment on the gods of the Egyptians, even in the tenth plague on the first begotten son.
- In the Egyptian culture today, and this would have most certainly been true with Pharaoh in that day, the first born son is heir to the throne.

LIFE LESSON #2: God is a jealous God with me, not of me, knowing that other gods can't love me, which is why he judges those gods for me.

5 Then the children of Israel moved from Rameses and camped at Succoth. 6 They departed from Succoth and camped at Etham, which is on the edge of the wilderness. 7 They moved from Etham and turned back to Pi Hahiroth, which is east of Baal Zephon; and they camped near Migdol. 8 They departed from before Hahiroth and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, went three days' journey in the Wilderness of Etham, and camped at Marah. 9 They moved from Marah and came to Elim. At Elim were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there. 10 They moved from Elim and camped by the Red Sea. 11 They moved from the Red Sea and camped in the Wilderness of Sin. 12 They journeyed from the Wilderness of Sin and camped at Dophkah. 13 They departed from Dophkah and camped at Alush. 14 They moved from Alush and camped at Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink. 15 They departed from Rephidim and camped in the Wilderness of Sinai.

- It's at this location that the Israelites receive the Law of God on the tablets of stone. It's taken about a year to get here, and they will stay here.

LIFE LESSON #3: God will lead, as we both read and heed, the Word we've heard. In other words God can't lead us, when we won't heed Him.

16 They moved from the Wilderness of Sinai and camped at Kibroth Hattaavah. 17 They departed from Kibroth Hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth. 18 They departed from Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah. 19 They departed from Rithmah and camped at Rimmon Perez. 20 They departed from Rimmon Perez and camped at Libnah. 21 They moved from Libnah and camped at Rissah. 22 They journeyed from Rissah and camped at Kehelathah. 23 They went from Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher. 24 They moved from Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah. 25 They moved from Haradah and camped at Makheloth. 26 They moved from Makheloth and camped at Tahath. 27 They departed from Tahath and camped at Terah. 28 They moved from Terah and camped at Mithkah. 29 They went from Mithkah and camped at Hashmonah. 30 They departed from Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth. 31 They departed from Moseroth and camped at Bene Jaakan. 32 They moved from Bene Jaakan and camped at Hor Hagidgad. 33 They went from Hor Hagidgad and camped at Jotbathah. 34 They moved from Jotbathah and camped at Abronah. 35 They departed from Abronah and camped at Ezion Geber. 36 They moved from Ezion Geber and camped in the Wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh. 37 They moved from Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, on the boundary of the land of Edom.

- All these places that we've just read, and the places we'll read about next, will encompass a journey that covered a period of about 38 years.

LIFE LESSON #4: God may delay but not deny. If I'm wrong; grow, my request is wrong; no, the timing is wrong; slow, when it's right, then go!

38 Then Aaron the priest went up to Mount Hor at the command of the LORD, and died there in the fortieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, on the first day of the fifth month. 39 Aaron was one hundred and twenty-three years old when he died on Mount Hor.

- To me, these two verses capture the importance of knowing family history for the generation that will now enter and inherit the Promised-Land.

LIFE LESSON #5: It's important the next generation know the history of their family, especially when it comes to the history of God's family.

40 Now the king of Arad, the Canaanite, who dwelt in the South in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel. 41 So they departed from Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah. 42 They departed from Zalmonah and camped at Punon. 43 They departed from Punon and camped at Oboth. 44 They departed from Oboth and camped at Ije Abarim, at the border of Moab. 45 They departed from Ijim and camped at Dibon Gad. 46 They moved from Dibon Gad and camped at Almon Diblathaim. 47 They moved from Almon Diblathaim and camped in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo. 48 They departed from the mountains of Abarim and camped in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho. 49 They camped by the Jordan, from Beth Jesimoth as far as the Abel Acacia Grove in the plains of Moab.

- This is where we now round a corner, and go from what's recorded in the text, to what's not recorded and conspicuously absent from the text.
- Here's what I'm thinking; there is absolutely no mention of any of their past sins, as horrific as they were, during the wilderness wanderings.
- I am keenly aware that the generation who committed these sins were severely punished, but notice that God doesn't mention sins of the past.

LIFE LESSON #6: God has forgiven and forgotten what I did in my past, however, He has not forgotten the forgiven when it comes to my future.

50 Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho, saying, 51 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan,

- We can really underestimate the profound and powerful impact of these words as it relates to "when" the Israelites enter the Promised-Land.
- In other words, the jury isn't still out, the verdict is now in, they will now enter in. It's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when they will enter in.

LIFE LESSON #7: It doesn't really matter how bad your journey is, because it can never change how good God is. He is only always good.

52 then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their engraved stones, destroy all their molded images, and demolish all their high places; 53 you shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to possess. 54 And you shall divide the land by lot as an inheritance among your families; to the larger you shall give a larger inheritance, and to the smaller you shall give a smaller inheritance; there everyone's inheritance shall be whatever falls to him by lot. You shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers.

- The inheritance of and entrance into the Promised-Land would not be free of many battles in which they would have to destroy the inhabitants.

LIFE LESSON #8: While God will always make good on His promises to us, the path of life will always be paved with many spiritual battles.

55 But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell. 56 Moreover it shall be that I will do to you as I thought to do to them."

- This is a sobering way to end the chapter, as this is what happened. They didn't drive the inhabitants out, so they were driven out of the land.

LIFE LESSON #9: If I do not get rid of the sinful inhabitants in my life, then God will allow them to haunt me and hunt me, for the rest of my life.